



170 Alameda de las Pulgas  
Redwood City, CA 94062-2799  
(415) 367-5561

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

July 31, 1995

David Werdegarr, MD, MPH, Director  
Health Planning and Policy Division  
Office of Statewide Health Planning and  
Development  
1600 9th Street Ste.400  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Dr. Werdegarr:

I would like to comment on the Outcome Data Study derived from 1990-1992 records of patients diagnosed with Acute Myocardial Infarction, Cervical or Lumbar Discectomy, or Obstetrical Delivery.

The analysis indicates that outcomes of care at Sequoia Hospital are fine. My concern is that consumers and others will come to rely upon this kind of simple information to signify more than the data sustain, and that the public will be misled. Although the study authors have mathematically correlated and qualified their methodology, the results are somewhat misleading.

Many hospitals have centers of excellence. For example, Sequoia Hospital is premier in cardiovascular services. This means that Sequoia supports Cardiovascular physicians who are renowned world wide. Difficult cases are often referred from surrounding hospitals and elsewhere. Thus, our patients are often complex - just as the risk factor data suggests in your report. We also know that a small coastal hospital in our county (that fared a higher "score") conscientiously refers serious cardiovascular patients to other hospitals. Thus, the outcome results data do not appear to be entirely reasonable. Perhaps this report is based too heavily on a business system and not on clinical care.

Sequoia Hospital physicians subject all complications to peer review. In order to assure that we take advantage of every opportunity to improve care, Sequoia focuses on quality management. We note that Sequoia's encoding practices were of such good quality that all cases were reported. This data is consistent with the fine reports we have received in the past. However, it does not reflect that since 1992, Sequoia has made significant improvements in services and community health.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these statistics.

Sincerely,

Arthur J. Faro  
Chief Executive Officer